

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 186203 TOSEC 080192
ORIGIN INR-07

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DRAFTED BY INR/RNA:S ROBERTS:BAL
APPROVED BY INR/DDR:M PACKMAN
INR/RNASTODDARD
INR/DD:R KIRK
S/S:TGMATIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 186203 TOSEC 080192

STADIS/////////////////////////////////
FOR SAUNDERS FROM PACKMAN AND KIRK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), SA

SUBJECT: BIO INFO ON BURG
REF: SECTO8083

1. FOLLOWINGISBIOINFO YOU REQUESTED ON BURG.
2. YOSUF BURG (ADDRESSED AS DR. BURG) IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER OF THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) AND A CON-SUMMATE POLITICAL TACTICIAN. HE CONSIDERS HIMSELF A RELATIVE MODERATE WITHIN THE PARTY ON TERRITORIAL ISSUES, AT LEAST AS COMPARED WITH THE HAWKISH YOUTH FACTION. HE IS NEVERTHELESS OPPOSED TO A COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK BECAUSE OF THE PROXIMITY OF THE FORMER BORDER TO ISRAEL'S POPULATION CENTERS. HE SUPPORTED THE DMC'S ENTERING THE CABINET ON THE GROUND THAT THAT WOULD BETTER ENABLE ISRAEL TO WITHSTAND US PRESSURE.

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3. BORN IN DRESDEN, GERMANY, BURG, NOW 68, RECEIVED A PHD FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN AND WAS ORDAINED A RABBI IN BERLIN. AS AN OFFICIAL OF THE PALESTINE OFFICE IN BERLIN DURING 1936-39, HE ENCOURAGED EMIGRATION TO PALESTINE, AND IN 1940 HE WENT THERE HIMSELF. DURING 1946-49 HE DIRECTED A JEWISH REFUGEE CENTER IN PARIS. AFTER THE

STATE OF ISRAEL WAS ESTABLISHED, BURG SERVED SUCCESSIVELY AS DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE KNESSET (1949-51), MINISTER OF HEALTH (1951-52), MINISTER OF POSTS (1952-58), AND MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE (1959-70). HE HAS BEEN MINISTER OF INTERIOR SINCE 1970. IN DECEMBER 1976 HE AND THE TWO OTHER NRP MINISTERS RESIGNED FROM THE CABINET IN THE WAKE OF NRP CHARGES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DESECRATED THE SABBATH.

4. BURG HAS MADE SEVERAL VISITS TO THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS A REPUTATION AS A STICKLER FOR DETAIL. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS A SON AND TWO DAUGHTERS. HE HAS VISITED THE US SEVERAL TIMES AND HAS SUBMITTED ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION IN ENGLISH.

5. BURG'S PRESENCE AS NRP REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM DERIVES PRINCIPALLY FROM HIS POSITION AS NOMINAL LEADER OF THE NRP. BURG'S INCLUSION IS ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO THE CRITICAL POSITION THAT THE NRP OCCUPIES IN THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. (NO LEADER HAS PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED AT THIS LEVEL.) NOT ONLY IS THE SURVIVAL OF THE COALITION TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE NRP, BUT THE NRP IS IN A POSITION TO CAPITALIZE ON ITS POTENTIAL FOR SWITCHING TO A COALITION WITH LABOR AND THE DMC, THEREBY BRINGING ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD EXCLUDE THE LIKUD.

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6. THE NRP WOULD CONSEQUENTLY SEEM TO ENJOY A VETO POWER OVER GOVERNMENT DECISIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS. BURG, THOUGH A RELATIVE MODERATE ON TERRITORIAL ISSUES, WILL BE CONSTRAINED BY THE NEED TO SATISFY THE EXTREME DEMANDS OF THE ASCENDANT, HARDLINE YOUTH FACTION WITHIN THE NRP. CHRISTOPHER

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NNN

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